

THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK IN THE CLASSICAL VOICE STUDIO

BY

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*For My Grandmothers, Patricia Phillips and Leah Polit*

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## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

It won't take much effort to convince the readers of this paper that the Great American Songbook repertory is full of lyrical gems. In fact, with little effort you might be able to quickly name ten or so songs that have made their auditory footprint on American society. More and more scholarship on this subject is being published by reputable musicologists; Alan Forte's formal analyses in his book *The American Popular Ballad of the Golden Era: 1924-1950* comes to mind, with his careful dissection of lyrics and musical structures.

What I am setting out to do is to convince the reader that these songs should be part of a classical singer's formal studies, particularly at the collegiate level. I know that I am not the exception to the norm when I recount that I was not assigned, nor did I bring this repertoire to my voice lessons, for either my bachelor's or master's degrees. It was not until I arrived at Indiana University under the tutelage of Patricia Wise that I witnessed a studio mate's recital, which contained a set of Cole Porter songs. Upon looking over the program, my first thought was, "Is this acceptable for a university voice recital?" Her recital set made me recall my freshman year in college when I was enchanted with *The Harold Arlen Songbook* I had checked out from the library. I played and sang though all of these songs, but never "studied" them, and never dreamed that I could use them in a song recital.

Although many knowledgeable voice teachers at universities and conservatories across the United States freely use this repertoire as a teaching tool, my experiences as a classical singer in the higher education system have understandably shown a

predisposition to song repertoire that can be defined as “Art Music,” excluding anything that might also be embraced by the neighboring jazz or musical theater departments.

There are many arguments besides the quality of these songs as to why they merit study in the classical voice studio. Firstly, if music departments with performance programs wish to be responsible educators, they must equip their students with repertoire that will help them win jobs in a competitive market. A quick look at several influential opera companies’ upcoming seasons will reveal a trend toward American Musical Theater. Houses like Chicago Lyric Opera and Houston Grand Opera have been including works such as *Showboat* and *Oklahoma!* in their lineups. My first professional job was with Ash Lawn Opera in Charlottesville, Virginia where I was asked to cover the role of Carrie Pipperidge in *Carousel*. I remember asking Professor Wise if she thought I was equipped for this role, mostly because of my lack of experience in this genre. I had only ever performed this repertoire as party tunes, casually entertaining my friends and family in informal settings. Thankfully, she said “of course” and together we made sure that I was well prepared for the assignment. Studying this repertoire proved to be a revelation. At first, it seemed a far cry from operatic roles that I had performed, but as I discovered what vocal skills I needed to bring Carrie to life, these two worlds seemed like one, even bringing new perspective into my classically oriented studies. It was during this learning process that I became aware of the viability of using this canon of music as an effective teaching tool.

Young singers in collegiate programs are often assigned a myriad of art songs in their first few semesters, usually mirroring their auxiliary studies of foreign languages, diction and song repertoire. From my observations of students in these beginning stages



of their study, it is the exceptional student that pays careful attention to the delivery of text, as well as the subtlety of the overall poetic structure and how it compliments or opposes the musical qualities of the piece. Indeed, it is an advanced skill, considering the hurdles a young singer has—juggling study of new languages and their pronunciation with the necessary considerations of technique, esoteric poetry, and musicianship. So why not strip away some of the linguistic and dramatic barriers by presenting the student a song in our American vernacular, with accessible melodies, witty and speech-driven texts, in a narrow range of topics (i.e. love, show-business and patriotism), where the delivery will be more intrinsic? (I am not suggesting that good English diction is without study and technique, but that challenges such as stress within the poetic phrase will be more evident.) Certainly, there are many wonderful American and British “Art Songs” that could fill this need, but the Great American Songbook canon is proving itself a viable collection of skillfully crafted songs worthy of preservation and presentation. Most of the songs that I will explore in this paper were conceived for a stage without electronic amplification, following in the footsteps of European and American Operetta, which is often deemed “more suitable” for the classical voice studio. Ideally, the skills of text delivery and musicianship that are learned easily in this genre will transfer into the student’s awareness when preparing more difficult challenges such as Debussy or Strauss. Most importantly, this genre has the ability to engage great fun and sentiment in both the audience and performer. Pursuing this music alongside the technical challenges of learning how to sing will serve as a constant reminder to the student as to why they decided to set foot in the voice studio in the first place.

In this document, I will first answer the question, “What exactly is the Great American Songbook?” detailing the history of its Tin Pan Alley roots through its heyday and decline. For the song selections I will focus on the years 1914 to 1948, which capture important works from the six composers included in this study: Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Richard Rodgers and Harold Arlen. Each composer will receive a brief biographical treatment, followed by selected songs for study, detailing stylistic and pedagogical considerations. I have also included recommended recordings for each of the songs, designed to highlight classical singers, singers who use good classical technique, or unique antique recordings available online from the Library of Congress. In the appendices I have listed composers and lyricists of this genre worthy of exploration who have not been expressly included in this document. Also in the appendices are interviews with Sylvia McNair and Timothy Noble, who have been recognized for their professional and academic success in this genre. Hopefully their experiences with the Great American Songbook will prove inspiring and encourage study and performance of these songs. While the amount of songs suitable for the scope of this document is limited, the creators of this genre were prolific, and I hope that my writing will encourage further exploration by the reader.

## CHAPTER 2: What is the Great American Songbook?

The Great American Songbook represents the canon of American popular song written during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was driven by the music publishing industry that hired some of the most influential songwriters of the day, such as Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin and Cole Porter. In order to encourage sales of their sheet music, the industry “plugged” its music in venues where it would gain exposure, including vaudeville, theaters, jazz and dance bands, and eventually radio and film. Sometimes called the Golden Age of American Popular song, the period between 1900 and 1950 saw some 300,000 songs copyrighted,<sup>1</sup> with some of its most important and memorable songs being written between 1920 and 1950.

Many of these songs share similar attributes, with most being 32 measures in length (Harold Arlen was a frequent exception), usually in AABA form, often with a recitative-like introduction known as a verse or lyric.<sup>2</sup> The subject matter for this genre is limited, with the majority of the songs being ballads about love (found, lost, or searching for) or syncopated tunes embracing the joys of dancing, music or life. The lyrics are witty and playful, especially in the songs of Cole Porter, and can also be unusually elegant, as demonstrated by lyricist Dorothy Fields. The best composers invented melodic “ear worms” that stuck with the listener and encouraged sheet music sales. Composers played with pentatonic and chromatic creations over winding modulations

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1. Alec Wilder, *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900 – 1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), xxxviii.

2. Stephen Zegree, *The Complete Guide to Teaching Vocal Jazz* (Dayton, Ohio: Heritage Music Press, 2002), 33.

and harmonic subtleties. These popular tunes were not only catchy, but also extremely well crafted.

The Great American Songbook's roots lie in a group of music publishing firms based out of Manhattan. Before the 1890's music publishers were solely classical publishers, music storeowners or local printers. This music was sold in their stores and given to travelling salesmen, not unlike Harold Hill in *The Music Man*. Some of these travelling salesmen discovered that they could write better material for a greater profit and began writing, publishing and selling their own songs, thus giving birth to the songwriter-driven publishing houses. These popped up all over the United States, in such cities as Chicago, St. Louis, Detroit, Boston, with the largest concentration in Manhattan, otherwise known as Tin Pan Alley.<sup>3</sup> The moniker was coined by Monroe Rosenfeld when writing an article for the *New York Herald*. It seems he was leaving the group of publisher's offices on West 28<sup>th</sup> between Broadway and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the racket of the competing pianos heard in the alley sounded like a bunch of tin pans clanging.<sup>4</sup>

The publishers' main goal was to sell sheet music, which was achieved by making sure the songs were quickly turned out and had a broad audience. Publishers began to hire "stables" of songwriters and even their own musicians to act as song "pluggers" (which was one of Jerome Kern's first jobs in the music industry). Performers in bands, theaters and vaudeville were provided cheap newsprint copies of the music for use in their shows. A great deal of sales rested on Tin Pan Alley's symbiotic relationship with

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3. David A. Jasen, *Tin Pan Alley: An Encyclopedia of the Golden Age of American Song* (New York: Routledge, 2003), x.

4. Ibid., ix.

vaudeville troops that would stop in at the publisher's to pick up new songs before going on tour. The result was a greater audience for the songs and more sheet music sales.<sup>5</sup>

Max Dreyfus was a particularly influential player in Tin Pan Alley, being part owner of T.B. Harms & Co. publishing firm. Initially he published Americanized versions of European operettas, hiring Jerome Kern as one of his arrangers. Dreyfus bought out the whole company in 1904 and was responsible for hiring Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Vincent Youmans, Richard Rodgers and Cole Porter.<sup>6</sup> Eventually, T.B. Harms & Co. would be responsible for 90 percent of Broadway score publications.<sup>7</sup>

In its growth, Tin Pan Alley would move farther uptown closer to the theaters. The publishing firms began purchasing larger spaces to house all of their operations under one roof. In these buildings they employed their own orchestras, provided demo rooms and auditoriums to plug their music, as well as maintaining illustration departments to provide fanciful sheet music covers. Some of Irving Berlin's commentary captures the "big business" of it all. He said "A good song is a song that sells," and that he wrote "for the mob."<sup>8</sup>

The Alley would flourish until the stock market crash of 1929. Business continued throughout the Great Depression, but many of the largest firms were bought up by Hollywood, beginning with T. B. Harms being sold to Warner Brothers in 1929.<sup>9</sup> The great songwriters of Tin Pan Alley continued to produce music for Broadway, but could

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5. Ibid., xi.

6. Steven Suskin, *Show Tunes: The Songs, Shows, and Careers of Broadway's Major Composers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

7. *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World: Media, Industry and Society*, Volume 1 (New York: Continuum, 2003), 586.

8. Philip Furia and Michael Lasser, *America's Songs: The Stories Behind the Songs of Broadway, Hollywood, and Tin Pan Alley* (New York: Routledge, 2006), xxv.

9. Jasen, xiii.

now add film to their credits, reaching a broader audience. The advent of Rock and Roll signaled the decline of the songwriter-based music industry. With the technology of 45-RPM records being introduced in 1949, music companies began plugging individual artists to promote the sale of records, causing the decline of sheet music sales.<sup>10</sup> Many songs of the Great American Songbook lived on through popular jazz singers and crooners achieving individual fame in the late 1940s 1950s, 60s and 70s. Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sarah Vaughan and Tony Bennett are only a few of the popular artists that continued to champion this repertoire. Recently, singers such as Rod Stewart and Willie Nelson have added these songs to their repertoire, with Broadway star Michael Feinstein leading the pack through his informative PBS series and Great American Songbook Competition. Classical and Broadway recording artists, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Barbara Cook, Sylvia McNair, Patricia Racette, Audra McDonald and Kristin Chenoweth have all graced albums with this repertoire signaling not only a popular revival of these great tunes, but hopefully an adoption of these tunes into collegiate voice program teaching initiatives.

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10. Ibid., xv.

### CHAPTER 3: The Composers and Their Songs

**Jerome Kern** (b. January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1885; d. November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1945)

Jerome Kern is one of the most influential of the Great American Songbook composers, having written nearly 1000 songs and over 100 musicals.<sup>11</sup> Not only is he known for his gift of melodic sequence over cleverly-changing harmonies, but also for being the “father” of the integrated American musical by fusing strong story lines with music that furthers plot or character development.

Jerome David Kern was born in New York City in 1885 to a German Jewish immigrant father, Henry Kern, and an American Jewish mother, Fannie. Fannie was an accomplished pianist and taught her son to play. When Jerome was ten years old, the family moved to Newark, New Jersey, where his father would be in charge of a department store. That same year he saw his first musical, Victor Herbert’s *The Wizard of the Nile*. He was so affected by the experience that he reportedly played the score from memory when he got home. The young composer began to write music for his high school and community productions and expressed an interest in pursuing a career in music, much to his father’s chagrin. Henry wanted his son to join him in business, but as legend has it, at the age of 17 Jerome was supposed to order two pianos for his father’s store and accidentally ordered two hundred instead. This was one of his favorite stories to tell about his youth, recounting, “You’ve no idea what that many pianos coming off a

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11. Ronald Byrnside and Andrew Lamb, “Kern, Jerome,” *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/14917> (accessed January 25, 2014).

truck look like!" Due to this grievous error, his father relented and allowed him to attend the New York College of Music.<sup>12</sup>

While in college, he worked as a bookkeeper at Stern's Publishing and had his first composition "At the Casino" published in 1902 by Lyceum Publishing Company, a subsidiary of Stern's. The next year Jerome studied in Europe (although there is no official documentation of schooling or lessons) where he met his future wife, Eva Leale. Upon his return he worked as a rehearsal pianist and song plugger, when in 1904 Max Dreyfus, the publishing head of T. B. Harms, took notice of Kern and hired him to interpolate his own songs into European and British operettas in order to Americanize them for the Broadway stage.<sup>13</sup> An early commercial success was the song "How'd You Like to Spoon with Me?" (see fig. 1), a British-sounding tune written for *The Earl and the Girl* (1905). This job would take him to London almost yearly and provide him with a vehicle for his first big hit "They Didn't Believe Me" (see fig. 2), an innovative ballad interpolated into *The Girl from Utah* (1914). This song would be his first to sell over two million copies of sheet music.

Between 1915 and 1920 Kern would compose scores for sixteen Broadway musicals, shaping the future of American Musical Theater through his efforts with Guy Bolton at the Princess Theater. The Theater presented a uniquely intimate space of only 299 seats, requiring small scale, story-driven productions, contrasting with the grand spectacles seen in operettas and variety shows like Florenz Ziegfeld's *Follies*. For the first time, Kern's songs were used to develop the plot or characterization in uniquely

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12. The Guide to Musical Theater, "Jerome Kern," <http://www.guidetomusicaltheatre.com/biographies/kernjerome.htm> (accessed January 25, 2014).

13. Jasen, 235.



American settings, giving birth to the integrated American musical. In 1917 P.G.

Wodehouse joined Kern and Bolton in writing *Oh Boy!* which would run for 463 shows.

Another effort by the trio, *Oh Lady! Lady!* did not meet with as much success, but was the vehicle for the innovative song, “Bill.” The piece was cut from the show during rehearsals, but later used in one of the most popular stage works of all time, *Showboat*.<sup>14</sup>

Dorothy Parker lauded the trio’s Princess Theater accomplishments in *Vanity Fair*:

Well, Bolton and Wodehouse and Kern have done it again. Every time these three gather together, the Princess Theatre is sold out for months in advance. You can get a seat for *Oh, Lady! Lady!!* somewhere around the middle of August for just about the price of one on the stock exchange. If you ask me, I will look you fearlessly in the eye and tell you in low, throbbing tones that it has it over any other musical comedy in town. But then Bolton and Wodehouse and Kern are my favorite indoor sport. I like the way they go about a musical comedy. ...I like the way the action slides casually into the songs. ...I like the deft rhyming of the song that is always sung in the last act by two comedians and a comedienne. And oh, how I do like Jerome Kern's music.<sup>15</sup>

In 1925 Kern would have his first collaboration with Oscar Hammerstein II, with whom he would go on to write *Showboat* (1927). Based on Edna Ferber’s novel of the same name, *Showboat* produced numerous classics, such as, “Old Man River,” “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man,” “Bill” (Wodehouse), “Make Believe,” “Why do I love you?” and “You are Love.” It would run for 572 performances on Broadway, with productions mounted in London in 1928, Broadway and London revivals in 1946 and 1971, and

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14. Byrnside and Lamb.

15. Benny Green, *P. G. Wodehouse: A Literary Biography* (Pavilion Books: London, 1981), 110.

receive three film treatments<sup>16</sup> and numerous recordings, including a “definitive” 1988 EMI recording with the entire, original score and uncensored lyrics.

Due to the effects of the Great Depression on the Broadway scene, Kern went to work in Hollywood. His first efforts were film adaptations of his stage works, including: *Showboat*, *Sally*, *Sunny*, *The Cat and the Fiddle*, *Sweet Adeline*, *Music in the Air*, and *Roberta*.<sup>17</sup> He would go on to compose ten original scores for film, with the most memorable of these being *Swing Time* (with lyricist Dorothy Fields), which was a Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers vehicle featuring the songs “The Way You Look Tonight” and “A Fine Romance.” Lured back to Broadway in 1939, Kern and Hammerstein collaborated on *Very Warm for May*. Although the show was a flop, it featured one of duo’s finest ballads, “All the Things You Are.” Richard Rodgers stated that of all the great songs he did not write, this was the one he most wished he had written.<sup>18</sup> Kern would go on to win the Academy Award for his song “The Last Time I Saw Paris,” which was interpolated into the 1941 film adaptation of the Gershwin’s *Lady Be Good*. Kern was reported to have said that Harold Arlen should have won the award for his song “Blues in the Night.”<sup>19</sup>

Kern returned to New York in 1945 to work on *Annie Get Your Gun*, produced by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, with Dorothy Fields writing the lyrics. Only three days into his stay he collapsed on the street due to a brain hemorrhage. His last

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16. Jasen, 238.

17. Ibid.

18. Thomas S. Hischak, *Jerome Kern Encyclopedia* (Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 2.

19. Jasen, 239.

work would be his own biopic *Till the Clouds Roll By*, a tribute to Kern by MGM, which was released after his death, in 1946.<sup>20</sup>

### **Songs for the Studio: Jerome Kern**

#### **“They Didn’t Believe Me”**

*The Girl From Utah*, 1914

Lyrics by Michael E. Rourke (pen name: Herbert Reynolds)

This song was Jerome Kern’s first breakout hit, becoming a model for other ballads written for the stage. It was interpolated into the British import, *The Girl from Utah*. Rourke’s lyrics are very conversational in nature, which was a fresh concept for the listener of 1914.<sup>21</sup> This song, which was intended to “Americanize” the work, stood out not only from its counterparts in the show but also on Broadway and Tin Pan Alley.

Scored as a duet, two impassioned lovers declare their intent to spend their lives together despite their “doubting” friends. It is frequently performed as a solo, and appropriately so. The verse displays dance-like, dotted rhythms and seems entirely independent from the chorus. Alec Wilder, composer and author of a comprehensive review of songs from the Great American Songbook (*American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900 – 1950*), praises Kern’s skill in this song, saying, “It is evocative, tender, strong, shapely, and, like all good creations which require time for their expression, has a beginning, middle, and end.”<sup>22</sup> Reportedly, this song had a great impact

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20. Jasen, 240.

21. Philip Furia, *The Poets of Tin Pan Alley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 38.

22. Wilder, 35.

on the young George Gershwin, encouraging him to try his hand at composition for the theater.<sup>23</sup>

For the young singer, here is an opportunity to learn the art of the light lift without breaking the legato line, as employed when listing one's virtues. (i.e., your lips, your eyes, your cheeks your hair...). There is one tricky triplet, divided as "cert'n-ly-am," which many singers choose to perform as "I'm cer-tain-ly."

#### Recommended Recording:

Jerome Kern and Michael E. Rourke, *They Didn't Believe Me*, Alice Green and Harry Macdonough, Victor 35491, 1915,  
<http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/4061/> (accessed January 30, 2014).

It is fascinating to hear the voices of the singers who helped popularize these tunes when they were first written, working directly with the composers and lyricists of the day. The Library of Congress has a wonderful online resource of historic recordings entitled *National Juke Box*, which is available at <http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/>.

#### **"Bill"**

*Oh, Lady!*, 1917

Lyrics by P.G. Wodehouse

This song is recognized from the score of Kern and Hammerstein's 1927 hit, *Show Boat*. It was originally conceived for the musical comedy *Oh, Lady!*, but the composer thought the tune was too slow for the pace of the show.<sup>24</sup> The lyrics still

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23. Furia and Lasser, 13.

24. Wilder, 56.

belong to Wodehouse, but are often mistakenly attributed to Hammerstein. Although not one of Wilder's favorite tunes, he figures that it must be worthwhile: "Female Singers... have loved *Bill*, so it must be rewarding from the performer's point of view."<sup>25</sup> This statement is true, with the song being rewarding not only for its charming melodic line, but also for its sweet and funny lyric, with the performer puzzling at why she is so smitten with someone who is nothing special at all.

This song provides a great opportunity to teach about singing to the end of a sentence, despite strong rhythmic values in the melody that can easily take over. In other words, here is an opportunity to worry about poetic stress over rhythmic stress. The opening line reads, "I used to dream that I would discover the perfect lover someday." The longest note value in this phrase is a half note on the "-er" of "lover," which is an understandably problematic stopping point. This song can also help a performer learn about the art of rubato. For example, in measures 28 and 29 on the lines "Are not the kind that you would find in a statue, and I..." The singer can slightly slow down the eighth note pulse leading into "statue" to bring out unexpected non-rhyme, which also allows a little time to catch a breath before "And I..." when it is appropriate to pick up the pace of the tempo again.

Most arrangements of "Bill" look very similar, but the *Singer's Musical Theater Anthology* series of books has provided a slightly more orchestral-sounding accompaniment, which is preferable for a performing situation such as a recital.

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25. Ibid., 57.

Recommended Recording:

Jerome Kern and P.G. Wodehouse, “Bill,” *How Glory Goes*, Audra McDonald, Nonesuch 79580, 2000, compact disc.

**“You Are Love” and “Make Believe”**

*Showboat*, 1927

Lyrics By Oscar Hammerstein II

These songs are two affectionate love duets from Kern’s 1927 sensation, *Show Boat*, displaying the lovers (Gaylord Ravenal and Magnolia Hawks) at their first meeting, and again later in the show when their love is more fully developed. “You Are Love” is a sensuous and sweeping operetta-inspired waltz and “Make Believe” is full of charm, with a sometimes curious melodic line and a hopeful chromatic ascent in measures 25, 26 and 27. In the show it is sung by a tenor and soprano, but lyric baritones have incorporated these gems into their repertoire.

“Make Believe” moves itself along naturally, but singers must take caution not to overly draw out “You Are Love” as it could quickly become plodding. The temptation is great because of the soaring, almost operatic lines that could easily coax a performer into a moment of indulgence. Both of these songs could be sung outside of their duet settings as acceptable solo performances.

Recommended Recordings:

Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, “You Are Love,” *Show Boat: 1988 Studio Cast Recording*, Jerry Hadley and Frederica Von Stade, soloists; John McGlinn, Conductor, EMI Classics 3615432, 2006, compact disc.

Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, “Make Believe,” *If I Loved You: Duets from the Musicals*, Thomas Allen and Valerie Masterson, soloists, Jay Records CD1233, 1996, compact disc.

**“Smoke Gets in Your Eyes”**

*Roberta*, 1933

Lyrics By Otto Harbach

This is one of Jerome Kern’s most recognizable songs, from the musical *Roberta*.

“Yesterdays” is another popular song from the show, which has become a formidable jazz standard. “Smoke Get In Your Eyes” uniquely has no verse, getting right to the core of the emotion in the song. Most versions are published in E-flat, but the key was altered into two iconic film versions of this show. The first film adaptation of *Roberta* is from 1935, featuring Irene Dunne. She takes the piece one half step higher, perhaps to better negotiate the upper and lower female passaggio, as this piece tests a singer’s command of both. Kathryn Grayson takes the piece down a half step in *Lovely to Look At*, the 1952 film adaptation of *Roberta*. Aside from the passaggio difficulties, there are frequent leaps of sevenths and octaves to negotiate, making this a challenging piece to grow on.

Recommended Recording:

Jerome Kern and Otto Harbach, “Smoke Gets In Your Eyes,” *Roberta*, Irene Dunne, performer, RKO Pictures, 1935, re-released on Warner Home Video, 2000, DVD.

**“All the Things You Are”**

*Very Warm for May*, 1939

Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

This show, like many other flops in the theater, was the victim of a weak book. Thankfully Kern's rich score lived on despite its initial run of only fifty-nine performances. In a 1964 poll taken by the *Saturday Review*, "All the Things You Are" was revealed to be the favorite song among composers.<sup>26</sup> Even Richard Rodgers wished he could have claimed it as his own.

The rhetoric of Hammerstein's text is a bit more elevated than his usual lyric, making it linguistically "uncommon." Despite Kern's opinion that the music was "beyond the public's ear,"<sup>27</sup> the tune became a hit. It is a wonderful example of how Kern was fond of sequencing his motives. The opening phrase, "*You are the promised kiss of springtime...*" is mirrored down a fourth for the setting of the next reverent image, "*You are the breathless hush of evening....*" There are some tricky enharmonic passages in the piece as well, such as the G-sharp at the end of the B section, leading back into the A flat that brings the return of the A section. Sylvia McNair states that, "You're sure glad you have a trained voice when you have to negotiate those long lines and winding melody in 'All the Things You Are.'"<sup>28</sup> Despite the challenges, Hammerstein's "manipulation of long vowels and verbal phrasing brings out the musical pattern and makes the lyric eminently 'singable.'"<sup>29</sup>

#### Recommended Recording:

Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, "All the Things You Are," *Silver Linings: Songs By Jerome Kern*, Joan Morris, mezzo-soprano; William Bolcom, piano, Arabesque Recordings 6515, 2008, compact disc.

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26. Furia and Lasser, 157.

27. Wilder, 78.

28. Sylvia McNair, phone interview by author, January 26, 2014.

29. Furia, 9.



**Irving Berlin** (b. May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1888; d. September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1989)

Born Israel Isidore Baline in Temun Russia, this composer's bleak childhood of escaping genocide at the age of four, losing his impoverished, cantor father at eight, and finally running away from home at thirteen so as not to burden his mother, would belie his future success as America's most popular and prolific song composer. In order to support himself, the young Berlin began singing for pennies on the street, eventually working as a chorus boy, a vaudeville performer, a singing waiter and a song plugger. Having no formal musical training, he taught himself piano; however, he could only play in the key of F-sharp. He became known as "Irving Berlin" when he wrote the lyrics to "Marie from Sunny Italy." The song, for which Berlin earned thirty-seven cents, was published by Joseph W. Stern and Company in 1907, with Izzy Baline's name appearing as I. Berlin.<sup>30</sup>

From then on he continued to craft songs that would be interpolated into stage shows, often performing his own material. His first major success was the song "Alexander's Ragtime Band" in 1911. His skill earned him a partnership in Snyder and Waterson's publishing firm. In 1912 he married Dorothy Goetz and she contracted typhoid fever on their honeymoon in Cuba, dying five months later. This event inspired his first ballad "When I Lost You," selling two million copies. A few years later he would compose his first complete score for a stage show, *Watch Your Step* (1914), as a

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30. Jasen, 28; "Berlin, Irving," *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 4th ed., *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/epm/2064> (accessed January 26, 2014).

vehicle for the dancing team of Vernon and Irene Castle.<sup>31</sup> From this show came Berlin's first "double" song "Play a Simple Melody" which displays a rare instance of counterpoint in American Popular song. In this style one melody and set of lyrics is introduced, followed by another melody with its own set of lyrics, then the two are sung against each other. Other examples of Berlin's "double" songs are "You're Just in Love" and "Old Fashioned Wedding" from *Annie Get Your Gun*.<sup>32</sup>

During World War I he was drafted into the Army and stationed at Fort Yaphank on Long Island. Not being an early riser, Berlin approached his commanding officer about writing and producing a show to aid in recruitment and boost morale. Thus was born *Yip, Yip, Yaphank* in 1918, featuring such hits as "How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning" and "Mandy."<sup>33</sup> Berlin would go on to produce another Army-themed show and film based on *Yip, Yip, Yaphank* (*This is the Army*, 1943) during World War II, which toured the United States and U.S. bases in Africa, Europe and the South Pacific.<sup>34</sup>

In 1919 Irving opened his own publishing firm, the Irving Berlin Music Co., and two years later opened his own theater, the Music Box, with producer Sam Harris. The Music Box would feature Berlin's music, with some of his most beautiful ballads receiving their debut there. At the time, he was dating socialite Ellin Mackay despite her father's disapproval of the relationship. This tumultuous experience inspired many of

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31. Jasen, 29-30.

32. Jeffrey Magee, *Irving Berlin's American Musical Theater* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 22.

33. Jasen, 31.

34. "Berlin, Irving."

Berlin's more romantic hits, such as "What'll I Do?" and "Always" which was composed shortly before their wedding in 1926.<sup>35</sup>

"Blue Skies" was Berlin's first collaboration with his principle arranger, Helmy Kresa, who would continue to provide Irving's tunes with piano and orchestral accompaniments for the next sixty-five years.<sup>36</sup> The piece was interpolated into Rodgers and Hart's *Betsy* of 1927 and was such a hit that after this event, Rodgers and Hart would no longer allow other composers' music to be placed in their works. That same year, "Blue Skies" reappeared in the first talkie, *The Jazz Singer*. Irving would continue to make his mark in Hollywood, starting his film career with theme songs for *Mammy* and *Puttin' on the Ritz* (1930). From 1935 to 1939 he would work on a series of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers vehicles, one of the most famous being *Top Hat*, featuring the song "Cheek to Cheek." Other films from this period included *Follow the Fleet* (1936) and *On the Avenue* (1937), featuring the songs "Let's Face the Music and Dance" and "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm."<sup>37</sup>

Berlin's work continued in film, theater and song. In 1939 singer Kate Smith premiered the patriotic anthem, "God Bless America," with Irving donating all profits from this tune to the Boy and Girl Scouts of America.<sup>38</sup> The year 1946 brought about his best-known stage work, *Annie Get Your Gun*, based on the life of Annie Oakley who was portrayed by actress Ethel Merman. Many of Berlin's most recognizable songs are from this stage sensation, including: "They Say It's Wonderful," "The Girl That I Marry,"

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35. "Berlin, Irving."

36. Jasen, 32.

37. Ibid., 33.

38. "Berlin, Irving."

“Doin’ What Comes Natur’lly,” “I Got the Sun in the Morning,” “Anything You Can Do,” and “No Business Like Show Business.” In 1948 came the film *Easter Parade*, titled after a song from his 1933 stage hit, *As Thousands Cheer*. He returned to Broadway in 1950 with another success, *Call Me Madam*, and then returned again to Hollywood in 1954 for the popular *White Christmas*. His final published song was for the 1966 revival of *Annie Get Your Gun*, “An Old Fashioned Wedding.”<sup>39</sup>

What seems most notable about Irving Berlin was his adaptability. He gave his audiences ragtime and jazz-infused songs when they were on trend, wrote optimistic songs during the Great Depression, patriotic songs for wartime, and quickly adapted to the movie musical demands of the 30’s and 40’s. His prolific output did not go without recognition. He received a gold medal from President Dwight D. Eisenhower for his patriotic songs, a medal of merit from the U.S. Army, a Tony Award for his lifetime of contribution to the theater and an Academy Award for the song “White Christmas.”<sup>40</sup> Jerome Kern said it best when he stated that, “Irving Berlin has no place in American music. He *is* American music.”<sup>41</sup>

### **Songs for the Studio: Irving Berlin**

#### **“Oh! How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning”**

1918, *Yip, Yip, Yaphank*

Lyrics by Irving Berlin

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39. Jasen, 35.

40. “Berlin, Irving,” *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 4th ed.

41. Jasen, 35.

Teachers seem to be fond of assigning young men “militaristic” songs like Schumann’s “Die beiden Grenadiere,” so why not this appropriate and humorous song as well? It’s impossible to deliver this song without a little personality, so here is a wonderful opportunity to get a young student outside of his or her head. This is also an excellent exercise in tuning those arpeggios when imitating the bugler’s call.

Recommended Recording:

Irving Berlin, *Oh! How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning*, Arthur Fields, Victor 18489, 1918, <http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/6720/> (accessed January 30, 2014).

**“What’ll I Do?”**

*Music Box Revue*, 1924

Lyrics by Irving Berlin

“What’ll I do?” is a sweet number that delivers a ballad in popular waltz form. It is a rhythmically unique ballad, with the composer explaining that he syncopated the tune for people’s hearts, as well as their toes.<sup>42</sup> Berlin also reveals that he was so successful with his pickup triplet figures because he knew how to “vocalize” them.<sup>43</sup> In other words, he used fluid contractions with consonants that can be sung, such as the ‘ll,’ ‘m,’ and ‘n’ of “What’ll I do...” and “When I’m alone....”

There are a variety of appropriate key choices available to the singer in this piece, as displayed by the recommended recordings listed below. The historical recording

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42. Furia and Lasser, 37.

43. Ibid.

featuring Marcia Freer and Henry Burr is in E and Dame Felicity Lott's performance in D, with most publications printing the song in E-flat.

Recommended Recordings:

Irving Berlin, *What'll I do?*, Marcia Freer and Henry Burr, Victor 19301, 1924, <http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/9790> (accessed January 30, 2014).

Irving Berlin, "What'll I do?," *Call Me Flott*, Felicity Lott, soprano; Graham Johnson, piano, Champs Hill Records CD003, 2010, compact disc.

**"Always"**

1925

Lyrics by Irving Berlin

This tune was originally written for Berlin's music secretary's fiancée, Mona. Berlin hummed the tune and gave him the lyric, "I'll be loving you, Mona." The song surfaced years later as a wedding present for his second bride, Ellin Mackay.<sup>44</sup>

With this song Berlin gives the listener another beautiful waltz-ballad. It is elegant in its simplicity, and provides the performer with the opportunity to give an open, honest and heartfelt performance.

Recommended Recording:

Irving Berlin, "Always," *Puttin' on the Ritz: Capitol Sings Irving Berlin*, Gordon MacRae, Capitol Records CDP 7 98477 2, 1992, compact disc.

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44. Furia and Laser, 45.

The back-up choir and orchestration can come across as pretty cheesy on this particular recording, but here is a nice example of a large, well-used instrument, letting off the voice a bit and singing with finesse.

**“How Deep is the Ocean?”**

1932

Lyrics by Irving Berlin

This song has become a popular jazz standard, but nonetheless is a gorgeous, singable ballad outside of the jazz idiom. Like Kern’s “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes,” there is no introductory verse, and the song does not feel as if it is missing one. The range is just one half step beyond an octave, making it accessible to a younger singer (but, perhaps the sentiment belongs to a more mature singer). The steps are small in their ascent, never greater than a 4<sup>th</sup>, making it a good selection to concentrate on evening out the voice within a small range.

In the early thirties, Berlin, like most of the country, was a victim of the stock market crash. In the midst of his financial despair, his infant son died on Christmas. In a depressed state, Berlin hit a songwriting slump, lacking confidence in the tunes he was turning out. Rudy Vallee took interest in the song “Say it Isn’t So,” causing Berlin to reconsider some recently discarded tunes. This was one that got picked up off the editing room floor, helping to end his creative drought.<sup>45</sup>

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45. Ibid.

Recommended Recording:

Irving Berlin, “How Deep is the Ocean,” *Kiri Sings Berlin*, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, soprano; Jonathan Tunnick, conductor and the Abbey Road Ensemble, EMI Classics 5564152, 1998, compact disc.

The reviews for this album hailed Te Kanawa’s lovely instrument, but criticized the lack of emotion in her performance. I personally chose to highlight this recording because it shows an accomplished classical singer successfully negotiating the Great American Songbook genre. Tunnick’s arrangements are superb.

**“Cheek to Cheek”**

*Top Hat*, 1933

Lyrics by Irving Berlin

This song was written for the movie *Top Hat*, which was an early Fred Astaire vehicle. Berlin had come to the set with all of the tunes written, but the director announced that he wanted an “integrated” show, where the songs belong to the plot, so Berlin discarded all of his previously written material except for “Cheek to Cheek.”<sup>46</sup>

The voice enters the song with no pickups, creating a very noticeable and memorable onset for the singer. The piece builds incrementally, in a breathless and “heavenly” ascent, as dictated by the numerous repetitions of the consonant ‘h,’ which finally land at an [ i ] (closed ‘i’ vowel) on the word “speak,” displaying excellent text painting.<sup>47</sup> The “C” section of this extended form song (A A B B C A) calls for an increase in the emotion and desire of the performer, providing a charming second climax.

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46. Furia and Lasser, 130.

47. Ibid., 132.



If this non-ballad is appealing, I also recommend, **“Let’s Face the Music and Dance,”** from another Astaire film, *Follow the Fleet* (1936).

Recommended Recordings:

Irving Berlin, “Cheek to Cheek,” *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: Songs of Irving Berlin*, Joan Morris, mezzo-soprano; William Bolcom, piano, RCA Victor Gold Seal 3704-2-RG, 1988 (reissue from 1979), compact disc.

Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern, “Let’ Face the Music and Dance/ The Songs Is You,” *Barbara Cook Sings Mostly Sondheim: Live at Carnegie Hall*, Barbara Cook, Malcolm Gets, DRG 91464, 2001, compact disc.

William Bolcom’s charming and lively accompaniment in Berlin’s “Cheek to Cheek,” provides the perfect undercurrent for Joan Morris’ stylish vocals. Also excellent is Barbara Cook live in concert. In this version of “Let’s Face The Music and Dance,” the song is transformed into a duet with Malcolm Gets, combining it with Jerome Kern’s “The Song is You.”

**“They Say It’s Wonderful”**  
*Annie Get Your Gun*, 1946  
Lyrics by Irving Berlin

“They Say It’s Wonderful” is one of the most charming and memorable ballads in Berlin’s musical, *Annie Get Your Gun*. This song is also known for having introduced the world to the softer side of the brassy Ethel Merman.

“Wonderful” presents a student with a nice opportunity to learn about the power of dynamics. While musing that love must be “wonderful”, the singer has the

opportunity to give a large amount of voice to the first “wonderful” of the chorus, in measure 23, using terraced dynamics to retreat in embarrassment for the following echo and “so they say” (measures 24–28). This swelling of dynamics is also aided by the tessitura of each successive half phrase. This action is repeated, presenting the opportunity for imaginative variety. Other songs that merit mention from *Annie Get Your Gun* include two numbers for baritone, “**The Girl That I Marry,**” and “**I’m a Bad, Bad Man.**” The latter is delightfully sung by Howard Keel in the 1950 film version of *Annie Get Your Gun*. “**I Got the Sun in the Morning**” is yet another gem for a young mezzo-soprano in its original context, but could also easily be sung by a soprano or any male voice type. All of these pieces have been extracted from their original score and given orchestral-sounding accompaniments in *The Singers Musical Theater Anthology Series*.

Recommended Recordings:

Irving Berlin, “I’m a Bad, Bad Man,” *Annie Get Your Gun 1946 Original Cast Recording*, Neilson Taylor, MCA Records MCAD-10047, 1990, compact disc.

Irving Berlin, “The Girl That I Marry,” *Annie Get Your Gun 1946 Original Cast Recording*, Ray Middleton, MCA Records MCAD-10047, 1990, compact disc.

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa gives a lovely, light and girlish performance of “The Say It’s Wonderful,” as well as a fun rendition of “I Got the Sun in the Morning,” on her above mentioned album, *Kiri Sings Berlin*. On the original cast soundtrack of *Annie Get Your Gun*, Ray Middleton gives a wonderful example of how to sing through an “n” in “The Girl that I Marry,” and Neilson Taylor sings a testosterone-driven “I’m a Bad, Bad Man.”

Irving Berlin's "Double Songs" or "Counterpoint Songs" provide a nice opportunity for duets in studio recitals or other ensemble performances. A few examples are: "Simple Melody/ Musical Demon" from *Watch Your Step* (1914), "Kiss Me Again/ Kiss Me Once More" from *Century Girl* (1916), "Pack Up Your Sins and Go to the Devil" from *Music Box Revue of 1922*, "The Call of the South/ Swanee River" from *Music Box Revue of 1924*, "Blue Skies/ You Keep Coming Back Like a Song" from *Blue Skies* (1946), "I Wonder Why/ You're Just in Love" from *Call Me Madam* (1950) and "Old-Fashioned Wedding" from *Annie Get Your Gun* (1966).<sup>48</sup>

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48. Magee, 23.

**George Gershwin** (b. September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1898; d. July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1937)

The first composition that most people associate with George Gershwin is his concerto for piano and orchestra, “Rhapsody in Blue.” What this reveals is a composer whose career embraced both popular and classical idioms. Gershwin was one of the few composers coming out of Tin Pan Alley who simultaneously pursued serious classical study and composition, having studied with Rubin Goldmark, Joseph Schillinger, and Henry Cowell.<sup>49</sup>

Jacob Gershowitz was the second of three children born to Russian Jewish immigrants Rose and Moishe. In 1910 the family purchased a piano for George’s older brother, Ira, but George quickly became the main player of the new instrument. He took lessons with neighborhood piano instructors until 1912, when he began his studies with Charles Hambitzer. Hambitzer recognized the young musician’s aptitude and served as his mentor, accompanying him to various classical concerts. In 1914 George dropped out of high school to begin work as a song plugger for Remick and Company, earning fifteen dollars a week. The following year he cut his first player piano rolls for the Standard Music and Aeolian Companies and began composing his own works as part of his studies with Edward Kilenyi Sr. In 1916 he sold his first song, “When You Want ‘Em, You Can’t Get ‘Em, When You’ve Got ‘Em, You Don’t Want ‘Em,” to Harry von Tilzer. The

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49. Richard Crawford, “Gershwin, George,” *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online* Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/47026> (accessed January 27, 2014).

lyricist Murray Roth sold his future royalties to the young George for fifteen dollars, but the song would only end up bringing in five dollars for the composer.<sup>50</sup>

George left his job with Remick and Company in 1917, finding employment just a few months later at the Century Theater as a rehearsal pianist and concert organizer. He would see his first songwriting success with a piece sold to Fred Belcher (from his former employer, Remick and Company), “You-oo, Just You,” with lyrics by Irving Caesar. Much to their surprise, Belcher offered the duo five hundred dollars for the song, when they were only hoping for twenty-five dollars apiece.<sup>51</sup> In 1918 George signed on as a composer with T.B. Harms and Company for thirty-five dollars a week. The next year he composed his first score for Broadway, *La La Lucille*, and had his first major commercial success with “Swanee,” made popular by Al Jolson. “Swanee” would bring in ten thousand dollars in composer royalties in the year 1920.<sup>52</sup>

From 1920 to 1924 Gershwin would compose songs for five of George White’s *Scandals*, a revue style show designed to compete with Ziegfeld’s *Follies*. Despite being a flop, Gershwin’s one-act opera *Blue Monday* that was performed as part of the 1922 *Scandals* would attract the attention of orchestra and bandleader, Paul Whiteman. Whiteman commissioned George to write his largest commercial success, “Rhapsody in Blue,” for his Aeolian Hall concert entitled “An Experiment in Modern Music,” thus canonizing Gershwin as “the man who brought jazz into the concert hall.”<sup>53</sup> During the 1920s he would also compose three scores for Broadway and two for London, with his

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50. Jasen, 148.

51. Ibid., 149.

52. Crawford.

53. Ibid.

brother Ira. *Lady Be Good!*, their first full collaboration, would feature Fred and Adele Astaire with the song “Fascinating Rhythm.” (This song would go on to be adopted by jazz musicians, using its harmonic skeleton as a popular standard form known as “rhythm changes.”)<sup>54</sup> Also an active performer, George played for an Aeolian Hall concert in 1923 featuring Canadian soprano, Eva Gauthier. The theme of the recital was ancient and modern music for the voice, which included a set of songs by Kern, Berlin and Gershwin, alongside the music of Bellini, Purcell, Bartok and Hindemith (see fig. 1 on the next page). With all of Gershwin’s professional and financial success, he was able to move his family to the Upper West Side of New York City and travel to Europe, meeting with Prokofiev, Milhaud, Poulenc, Ravel, Walton and Berg.<sup>55</sup>

Even with Gershwin’s acceptance as a serious composer, he continued his work in the popular song genre, writing more scores for Broadway. In 1926, with the aid of P.G. Wodehouse and Guy Bolton, George and Ira produced one of their finest collaborations, *Oh, Kay*, which was named for George’s long time romantic partner, composer Kay Swift. The song “Someone to Watch Over Me” is one of the show’s biggest hits. This streak continued with *Funny Face* (1927), *Strike Up the Band* (1927), and *Girl Crazy* (1930).<sup>56</sup> The brothers’ 1931 collaboration, *Of Thee I Sing*, would earn Ira a Pulitzer Prize for Drama, with George receiving a posthumous Pulitzer in 1998 (the centennial of his birth) for his contribution.<sup>57</sup>

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54. Zegree, 88.

55. Ibid.

56. Gershwin Enterprises, “George Gershwin: The Legend Lives On,” Gershwin.com, <http://gershwin.com/about/george-gershwin> (accessed January 27, 2014).

57. Ibid.

Figure 1. Program for 1923 Eva Gauthier recital at Aeolian Hall<sup>58</sup>



## AEOLIAN HALL

34 West 43rd Street

Thursday Evening

### NOVEMBER 1st

Nineteen twenty-three  
at 8.15 P. M.

RECITAL OF ANCIENT AND  
MODERN MUSIC FOR VOICE

by

# EVA GAUTHIER

MAX JAFFE, At the Piano.

I

ANCIENT

- a. Dolente Immagine (Romanza da).....Vincenzo Bellini
- b. La Lusina (Arietta da) .....Gio. B. Perucchini
- c. When I have often heard ... { Henry Purcell
- d. Hark! Hark! the Echoing Air "The Fairy Queen".... {
- Author of words unknown

II

MODERN HUNGARIAN AND GERMAN

- a. Two Folk and Two Modern Hungarian Songs.....Bela Bartok
- b. Auf der Treppe sitzen meine Orchen..... { Paul Hindemith
- c. Durch die Abendlichen Gärten ..... {
- Poems by Christian Morgenstern & Herrian Schilling

III

AMERICAN

- a. The Siren's song (P. G. Woodhouse).....Jerome Kern
- b. Everybody step (Irving Berlin).....Irving Berlin
- c. Innocent ingenue baby (Brian Hooker)..... } George Gershwin
- d. Stairway to paradise..... } (words by R. G. De Silva & Arthur Francis)
- e. Swanee (I. Caesar).....George Gershwin

GEORGE GERSHWIN AT THE PIANO.

IV

AUSTRIAN

- Lied der Waldtaube (aus "Gurrelieder")..... Arnold Schönberg
- (J. B. Jacobson)
- Pianoforte arrangement by Alban Berg

V

BRITISH

THE BALLADS OF THE FOUR SEASONS

- Spring - Summer - Autumn - Winter (New).....Arthur Bliss
- Words by Li-Po

VI

FRENCH

- a. Chant de la Nourrice (Poemes Juifs).....1916 Darius Milhaud
- b. L'Alouette (Du Baras) .....(New).....Maurice Delage
- c. 2 Chansons Espagnols .....(New)..... } Swan Hennessy
- d. Sur les murs de Salamanca ..... }
- e. Mon voisin est don Henriques (New)..... }

Tickets 75c., \$1.00, \$1.50, \$2.00. Boxes \$15.00 Plus 10% War Tax.  
 On Sale at Aeolian Hall Box Office.

Management: WOLFSOHN MUSICAL BUREAU, INC.  
 Victor Records. Steinway Piano Used

58. Charles Schwartz, *Gershwin: His Life and Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979),

Amid the many concerts and tours of his music, George found time to host a radio show, *Music By Gershwin*, which ran on CBS from 1934 to 1935. He composed his opera *Porgy and Bess* (1935) that ran for only 124 performances and did not earn enough to recover the original investment.<sup>59</sup> In 1936 he and brother Ira took a contract with RKO Studios and moved to Hollywood, working on *Shall We Dance* (1937), *A Damsel in Distress* (1937), and *The Goldwyn Follies* (1938). Many of their most memorable tunes came from this series of films, including “Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off,” “Nice Work if You Can Get It,” and “They Can’t Take That Away From Me.” George unfortunately would not see *The Goldwyn Follies* to completion. He died in 1937 at the age of 38 due to complications from a brain tumor. However, George’s musical legacy would live on, with a biopic entitled *Rhapsody in Blue*, several Broadway shows based on his music that were produced posthumously, many revivals of *Porgy and Bess*, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and a room in the Library of Congress with George’s grand piano and Ira’s portable typewriter.<sup>60</sup>

### **Songs for the Studio: George Gershwin**

In my estimation, the songs of George Gershwin pose less technical difficulty for singers than the other composers considered in this document. Rarely does he employ the large leaps seen in some of Kern’s or Arlen’s tunes. He keeps the majority of his melodic motion within a third, which gives his songs an overall smoother texture. His

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59. Crawford.

60. Ibid.; Jasen, 153.



harmonic changes are mobile and dynamic, and often escort the singer through his works with little effort. Both George and Ira were careful craftsmen, and I cannot imagine that any of their songs are inappropriate for the classical voice studio.

**“Someone to Watch Over Me”**

Oh, Kay! 1926

Lyrics by Ira Gershwin

This song was originally intended as a dance number, marked as *scherzando*.<sup>61</sup> Considering the fame this song has achieved as a slow tempo ballad, it’s fascinating to consider it being performed at the other extreme. Furia notes that the text is marked by the “nervous impatience” of the singer to find love.<sup>62</sup>

Recommended Recording:

George and Ira Gershwin, “Someone to Watch Over Me,” *The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert, Live from Wigmore Hall: Sylvia McNair and Ted Taylor – George and Ira Gershwin*, Sylvia McNair, soprano; Ted Taylor, piano, BBC Music 1221627, 2000, compact disc.

**“But Not For Me”**

*Girl Crazy*, 1930

Lyrics by Ira Gershwin

Alec Wilder calls *Girl Crazy* a “frothy jazz-age musical.”<sup>63</sup> It escorted a young Ginger Rogers onto the scene, and with numbers like “But Not For Me,” and “I Got

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61. Wilder, 137.

62. Furia, 133.

63. Wilder, 149.

Rhythm,” how could her career not go on to be a success? Wilder also notes that this song is, “a masterpiece of control and understatement from beginning to end, verse and chorus.”<sup>64</sup> The text is different from the traditional romantic ballad in that it pokes fun at the clichés commonly found in a love song. Clever lines such as, “With love to lead the way, I’ve found more clouds of gray than any Russian play could guarantee...” help to cement this gem in the listener’s memory.

Also from *Girl Crazy* is the sweet “**Embraceable You.**” This song is another favorite of Alec Wilder’s for its “simplicity and economy.”<sup>65</sup> Gershwin has included a charming rhythmic accent in this song, which could easily be overlooked and “sung through” by a singer overly concerned with the line of the phrase. He separates the “able” suffix from the words “embrace” and “irreplacable,” by putting the root of the word on an eighth note down beat, followed by a quarter rest before the placing the suffix on the following eighth note. Then, this action is heightened by breaking up words after one syllable, like “gyp-sy” and “tip-sy.” Glossing over this unique trait of the song would make it void of one of its most memorable charms.

#### Recommended Recordings:

George and Ira Gershwin, “But Not For Me,” *Marni Nixon Sings Gershwin*, Marni Nixon, soprano; Lincoln Mayorga, piano, Reference Recordings RR-19CD, 1985 (re-released 1990), compact disc.

George and Ira Gershwin, “Embraceable You,” *So Much to Tell*, Measha Bruggersgosman, soprano; Ray Goodman, conductor; Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, CBC Records SMCD 5234, 2004, compact disc.

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64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

Marni Nixon shows her command of the Great American Songbook repertoire in her recording of “But Not For Me.” She takes time to accentuate important words in the song, adding an extra hint of emotion by employing a speech-like quality in her voice (i.e. I was a *fool* to *fall*...). Bruggergosman has a large, richly colored instrument that surprisingly works extremely well in this repertoire. Her recording (along with several recordings by mezzo-soprano Sarah Walker) provides a convincing argument for the student who claims that they don’t have the right color or size of instrument to pull off songs of this genre. Bruggergosman’s “By Strauss” and “I’ve Got a Crush on You” are also excellent.

**“Nice Work if You Can Get it”**

*A Damsel in Distress*, 1937

Lyrics by Ira Gershwin

*A Damsel in Distress* and *The Goldwyn Follies* would be the last productions that George would work on before his untimely death, with “Nice Work if You Can Get It,” one of his final songs.<sup>66</sup> The chorus is much more recognizable than the verse here, being marked by its perfect contrast between smooth and swinging. It’s a great opportunity for a singer to practice a variety of textures in one compact tune. When I think of this song, the voice that comes to mind is Sylvia McNair. She expertly ends this tune with its big reveal, a beautifully sighed “won’t you tell how?”

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66. Wilder, 138.

### Recommended Recording:

George and Ira Gershwin, “Nice Work if You Can Get it,” *The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert, Live from Wigmore Hall: Sylvia McNair and Ted Taylor – George and Ira Gershwin*, Sylvia McNair, soprano; Ted Taylor, piano, BBC Music 1221627, 2000, compact disc.

### **Gershwin’s Novelty Songs**

Here are four songs that are very silly and a lot of fun to sing. Each of them gives a little wink to the art of song or poetry, and encourages us not to take ourselves too seriously. These are great party songs, which Sylvia McNair advised me is something of which a singer can never have too many. All of these tunes are also excellent encores on a recital.

#### **“Blah, Blah, Blah”**

*Delicious, 1931*

Lyrics by Ira Gershwin

This tune pokes fun at the art of the romantic ballad and saccharine rhymes.

#### **“The Lorelei”**

*Pardon My English, 1933*

Lyrics by Ira Gershwin

A nod to the Lorelei of literary and musical fame, this song states, “I want to be just like that other trollop, like the Lorelei... I’m treacherous, I’m lecherous, I want to bite my initials on a sailor’s neck!” Like in “By Strauss,” there are plenty of “Ja, ja”s thrown in as a wink to the myth’s Germanic roots.

**“By Strauss”**

*The Show is On*, 1936

Lyrics by Ira Gershwin

This song is not immediately recognizable as a Gershwin tune, and Wilder claims that this is the only Waltz of the composer’s that he has ever come across.<sup>67</sup>

**“I Love to Rhyme”**

*The Goldwyn Follies*, 1937

Lyrics by Ira Gershwin

The title says it all. This one is a showstopper.

Recommended Recordings:

“Blah, Blah, Blah,” “The Lorelei,” and “I Love to Rhyme”

*Blah, Blah, Blah and Other Trifles*, Sarah Walker and Roger Vignoles in *Cabaret*, Sarah Walker, soprano; Roger Vignoles; piano, Hyperion CDA66289, 1988, compact disc.

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67. Wilder, 155.

**Richard Rodgers** (b. June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1902; d. June 29<sup>th</sup> 1979)

Richard Rodgers was born in New York to second-generation Russian-Jewish immigrants, Dr. William Rodgers (Rogazinsky) and Mamie Levy. His childhood home was decidedly a musical one, with his father singing songs from Broadway and Tin Pan Alley while his mother played the piano. Despite refusing formal piano lessons, the young Rodgers enjoyed playing songs by ear, reportedly picking out tunes from *The Merry Widow* at the age of four. His fascination with theater began at the age of six, when he was taken to see the children's musical, *The Pied Piper* (Klein and Burnside) and Victor Herbert's *Little Nemo*. His love of the art form continued throughout his childhood, as demonstrated by his frequent attendance of Princess Theatre musicals by Kern, Bolton and Wodehouse. It is reported that he saw *Very Good Eddie* six times. At the age of fourteen he began to write his own music, donating tunes to his school and Camp Wigwam in Maine, and by fifteen he had copyrighted his first work, "Auto Show Girl."<sup>68</sup>

Richard's older brother Mortimer, a student at Columbia, asked him to compose music for his collegiate club's benefit show. In an effort to help out the inexperienced Rodgers, one of the club members introduced him to the lyricist Lorenz Hart, who was seven years his senior. The two instantly bonded over their love of Jerome Kern and Princess Theatre musicals, thus beginning their long writing partnership with *One Minute, Please* (1917). Rodgers recounts that, "In one afternoon I acquired a career, a

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68. Geoffrey Block, "Rodgers, Richard," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23644> (accessed January 27, 2014); Jasen, 338-339.

partner, a best friend, and a source of permanent irritation.”<sup>69</sup> The two wrote fifteen songs in their first week of collaboration, and achieved their first publication together with the tune “Any Old Place With You.” The song would be interpolated into the show, *A Lonely Romeo* (1919), the same year Rodgers began his studies at Columbia. Leo Fields, the producer of *A Lonely Romeo*, took notice of the team and hired them to contribute eight songs to his production *Poor Little Ritz Girl*, which would also feature songs by Sigmund Romberg. It was here that they met Leo’s son, Herbert Fields, who would write the books for most of Rodgers and Hart’s shows through the 1930s.<sup>70</sup>

Rodgers continued to sharpen his composition skills through studies with Percy Goetschius at the Institute of Musical Art (Juilliard). Despite his studies, the next five years produced little success for the young composer. It would not be until they were approached by the Theatre Guild to write songs for its fundraiser review, *The Garrick Gaieties* (1925), that the creative team would gain recognition. This recognition came just in time, considering that Rodgers was about to take a steady job in children’s underwear sales. The show was only scheduled for two performances, but ended up running for one hundred and sixty-one, featuring the songs “Sentimental Me (and Romantic You)” and “Manhattan.” “Manhattan” would be recorded and popularized by Paul Whiteman and his orchestra (of *Rhapsody in Blue* fame).<sup>71</sup> Post *Gaieties* successes would include: *Dearest Enemy* (1925), *The Girl Friend* (1926), the *Garrick Gaieties 2* featuring the song “Mountain Greenery,” a 1927 London revue with the song “One Dam Thing After Another,” *A Connecticut Yankee* (1927) which was based on a Mark Twain

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69. Furia, 95.

70. Jasen, 340.

71. Ibid.

novel and featured the song “Thou Swell,” *Present Arms!* (1928), *Spring is Here* (1929) featuring “With a Song in My Heart,” *Simple Simon* (1930), and *America’s Sweetheart* (1931) with the popular Depression-era song “I’ve Got Five Dollars.”<sup>72</sup>

Over the next five years, the songwriting duo would try their hand in Hollywood, with numerous successes such as *Love Me Tonight* (1932), which was directed by Rouben Mamoulian who would go on to direct Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* on Broadway and in Film, as well as the original stage versions of *Oklahoma!* and *Carousel*. The film would feature the tune “Lover,” setting the precedent for the “Rodgers’ Waltz,” exemplified by hit tunes such as “Falling in Love with Love,” “The Most Beautiful Girl in the World,” “Out of My Dreams,” and “Edelweiss.” Other film works included *The Phantom President* (1932), *Hallelujah, I’m a Bum* (1933), *MGM’s Hollywood Party* (1934), *Manhattan Melodrama* (1934), and *Mississippi* (1935).<sup>73</sup>

1935 would also mark the team’s return to the Broadway stage, collaborating with well-known artists such as directors George Abbott and Joshua Logan, and choreographer George Balanchine. *Jumbo* (1935) turned out such hits as “My Romance” and “Little Girl Blue.” *On Your Toes* of 1936 was the vehicle for the ballet *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue* that developed a life of its own in ballets and orchestral concerts.<sup>74</sup> *Babes in Arms* (1937) produced “My Funny Valentine” and “The Lady is a Tramp” (humorously played at the White House when President Gerald Ford asked Queen Elizabeth II for the first dance). The year 1938 gave audiences *I Married an Angel* (originally intended as a movie), and one of Rodgers and Hart’s finest scores, *The Boys from Syracuse*, based on

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72. Jasen, 340-341.

73. Block.

74. Ibid.



Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors*. The early 1940s marked the indelible duo's last two collaborations, *Pal Joey* with its adult themes and the song "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," as well as a Broadway revival of *A Connecticut Yankee*.<sup>75</sup>

Hart turned down the opportunity to work on a musical version of the Theatre Guild's *Green Grow the Lilacs*. Some sources cite that he didn't think the play would work as a musical,<sup>76</sup> while others suggest that he was sinking into a myriad of personal problems and alcoholism.<sup>77</sup> Either way, Rodgers was in need of a lyricist for this project. He invited his former schoolmate, Oscar Hammerstein II, to lunch to discuss the work. Hammerstein admitted that he had brought the same idea to Jerome Kern, who also turned it down.<sup>78</sup> The two worked together in a new manner, with Hammerstein completing the lyrics before Rodgers composed the tunes. What resulted were more complex and through-composed works, with the overall show being greater than the sum of its songs. *Green Grow The Lilacs* would change the face of American Musical Theater in its new incarnation as *Oklahoma!* Running for 2,248 performances, 1943's *Oklahoma!* was the first show to issue a complete original cast recording, selling one million copies. In addition to the stage and recording success of the musical, Rodgers and Hammerstein would open the Williamson Music Company solely to handle the publication of the songs from the show.<sup>79</sup>

In 1945 the duo wrote two important works, *State Fair*, a musical conceived for film, and *Carousel*, which Rodgers referred to as his opera. "Soliloquy," one of the most

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75. Block.

76. Jasen, 170.

77. Block.

78. Jasen, 170.

79. Ibid., 171.

famous selections from *Carousel*, was the longest popular song published at that point, running fifteen pages. *Allegro* (1947) failed as a show, but the duo quickly came back with *South Pacific* in 1949, based on James Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning work for fiction. Rodgers and Hammerstein's stage adaptation would go on to win its own Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1950, running for 1,925 performances with opera star Ezio Pinza singing the role of Emile de Becque.<sup>80</sup> The next year they would venture into a stage work based on the film *Anna and the King of Siam*, which became *The King and I*. Their other stage works include: *Me and Juliet* (1953), *Flower Drum Song* (1958), and *The Sound of Music* (1959).

Rodgers and Hammerstein were also successful producers, overseeing various plays, a revival of *Show Boat*, and the premier of *Annie Get Your Gun*. Shortly after the opening of *The Sound of Music*, Oscar Hammerstein II died of stomach cancer. Rodgers would take on the role of composer and lyricist for *No Strings Attached* (1962) and work with Stephen Sondheim on *Do I Hear a Waltz?* (1965). His work with other collaborators on *Two by Two* (1970), *Rex* (1976), and *I Remember Mama* (1979) is less memorable, most likely due to his ailing health. He died in 1979 from complications with jaw cancer.<sup>81</sup>

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80. Jasen, 171.

81. Block.

## **Songs for the Studio: Richard Rodgers**

### **“Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered”**

*Pal Joey*, 1940

Lyrics by Lorenz Hart

“Bewitched” comes from Rodgers and Hart’s very adult-themed musical, *Pal Joey*. In this song, Vera, a wealthy widow has just had her first sexual encounter with the show’s anti-hero. The verse suggests a hungover Vera, “After a quart of brandy...with no...seltzer handy...” and is often left out of concert performances, making the rest of the song easier to take out of context. This is not for the young singer as the lyrics suggest a very experienced lover, someone who’s been there and done that. Nonetheless, this is one of the duo’s most brilliant songs, and would be very engaging in concert for the right performer.

#### Recommended Recording:

Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, “Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered,” *The Rodgers and Hart Album (with Lucy Simon)*, Joan Morris, mezzo-soprano; William Bolcom; piano, RCA Red Seal ARL 1-4123, 1981, LP record.

### **“My Funny Valentine”**

*Babes in Arms*, 1937

Lyrics by Lorenz Hart

This might be Rodgers and Hart’s best-known song, and it is a standout for being an unconventional ode to love. The verse is unaccompanied, with the lyrics making frequent use of formal language such as “thou” and “doth,” before leading into the mixed

compliments and more colloquial language of the chorus. Wilder appreciates this song for the lyrics which “show detachment and sympathy in balance,” as well as for the music’s “remarkable climax.”<sup>82</sup> For the singer, the verse is very conversational and middle-voiced, making a good pre-recitative study. The chorus sits very low, hovering around D-sharp 4 for the first four bars and F-sharp 4 for the following four bars, eventually climaxing to an E 5. This is a great selection for a mezzo-soprano, despite its appearance in the soprano volume of *The Singer’s Musical Theater Anthology*.

Recommended Recording:

Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, “My Funny Valentine,” *More Rodgers and Hart*, Joan Morris, mezzo-soprano; William Bolcom, piano, RCA Red Seal ARL 1-4676, 1983, LP record.

**“To Keep My Love Alive”**

*A Connecticut Yankee*, 1943 Revival

Lyrics by Lorenz Hart

“To Keep My Love Alive” was Hart’s last song before his death, written for Vivienne Segal’s appearance in the 1943 revival of *A Connecticut Yankee* (1927).<sup>83</sup> The singer lists ways she has disposed of her husbands in order to remain faithful and “keep her love alive.” It is not vocally challenging, but requires a great deal of personality to keep the audience enthralled with the various ways of murdering someone. Like the Gershwin novelty songs, this would make an excellent encore or party tune.

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82. Wilder, 206.

83. Thomas S. Hischak, *The Rodgers and Hammerstein Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press), xxxv.

Recommended Recording:

Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, “To Keep My Love Alive,” *My Funny Valentine: Songs by Rodgers and Hart*, Frederica Von Stade, soprano; John McGlinn, conductor; The London Symphony Orchestra, EMI Digital CDC 7 54071 2, 1989, compact disc.

**Falling in Love with Love**

*The Boys from Syracuse*, 1938

Lyrics by Lorenz Hart

This beautiful waltz once again challenges tired romantic conventions. Rodgers himself said that the charm in this piece was in the “sweet and sour” juxtaposition of the music and lyrics. In its original key of C, with a modulation to D-flat, the piece soars in the final verse, allowing the voice to really sing on a sustained F 5 and A-flat 5.

Recommended Recording:

Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, “Falling in Love With Love,” *My Funny Valentine: Songs by Rodgers and Hart*, Frederica Von Stade, soprano; John McGlinn, conductor; The London Symphony Orchestra, EMI Digital CDC 7 54071 2, 1989, compact disc.

Frederica Von Stade’s delight in the Great American Songbook repertoire is made evident by the care and passion with which she infuses her performances. Her renditions of “Falling in Love With Love” and “To Keep My Love Alive” are particularly fine.

Richard Rodgers’ work with Oscar Hammerstein is some of the best known and most loved in American Musical Theater. I won’t devote too much space to these

selections, since they seem to be obvious choices for the studio, with opera singers such as Ezio Pinza originating the role of Emile de Becque in *South Pacific*, and Stephanie Blythe and Nathan Gunn starring in Lincoln Center's 2013 production of *Carousel*. I do want to highlight two selections from *Carousel* (1947) that are more aria-like in their extended forms and will definitely benefit the student singer musically and dramatically. The first song is "**Mister Snow,**" which is a charming selection for a young soubrette. The tessitura is similar to that of a Mozartian maid, with frequent dramatic beats to guide the piece as Carrie Pipperidge tells her friend about her new fiancée. "**Soliloquy,**" sung by the manly Billy Bigelow, chronicles his emotions upon finding out he will be a father. This is a big sing and suitable for the more advanced baritone, making this tour-de-force an excellent recital selection.

Recommended Recordings:

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, "Mister Snow," *Carousel* (1994 Broadway Revival Cast), Audra McDonald, EMI Angel Records 55199, 1994, compact disc.

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, "Soliloquy," *Carousel* (1945 Original Broadway Cast), John Raitt, Naxos Musicals 8.120780, 1994, compact disc.

Additional Recommended Recording:

*Eileen Farrell Sings Rodgers & Hart*, Eileen Farrell, soprano; Loonis McGlohon, piano/arrangements, Reference Recordings RR32, 1993, compact disc.

Having studied American popular song with Eileen Farrell, Sylvia McNair noted that she was remarkable in her ability to cross genres, stating that "she was the kind of

singer who would do a show at the Met on Thursday and jazz concert on Saturday.”

Different from many of the other recordings mentioned in this document, this later Farrell recording employs a more chest-driven, jazzy vocal technique for her Great American Songbook selections. This CD is a fascinating listen.

**Cole Porter** (b. June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1891; d. October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1964)

Cole Albert Porter was born into a wealthy family in Peru, Indiana. His mother, Kate, an accomplished pianist herself, was responsible for enrolling him in music lessons at the Marion Conservatory. He studied violin from the age of six and piano from the age of eight. He enjoyed writing melodies, with his mother subsidizing his first publication, “The Bobolink Waltz,” in 1902. He would be sent to the East Coast for his high school education, attending the Worchester Academy from 1905 to 1909. He wrote music for shows at school, and would continue this practice when he enrolled at Yale University. At Yale he wrote tunes for the Drama Club and the Glee Club, also composing two fight songs for the university, “Bingo Eli Yale” and “Bulldog.” After graduating from Yale he would go on to Harvard to study law, changing his course of studies to music midway through the program.<sup>84</sup>

By 1915 he had two songs interpolated into Broadway shows, but neither met with success. His first full production, *See America First*, was mounted in 1916, only running for a meager fifteen performances.<sup>85</sup> With little success in his chosen field he moved to Paris in 1917. There seem to be varying opinions as to whether or not he actually joined any branch of service, but he claimed to have been a member of the

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84. Deane L. Root and Gerald Bordman, “Porter, Cole,” *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/22147> (accessed January 28, 2014).

85. “Porter, Cole,” *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 4th ed., Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/epm/22283> (accessed January 28, 2014).



French Foreign Legion.<sup>86</sup> He maintained a residence in Paris, and became famous for throwing lavish parties in Venice, Italy and on the French Riviera while entertaining his guests with his own compositions.<sup>87</sup> It was at this time that he met his wife, Linda Thomas, a wealthy divorcee from Kentucky. The two married in 1919 for social reasons, but were only ever friends. That same year he enrolled at Schola Cantorum under the tutelage of Vincent d'Indy and had his first hit, "Old Fashioned Garden" from the *Hitchy-Koo Revue*.<sup>88</sup> Porter received this break in the business by befriending Producer Raymond Hitchcock on one of his trips back to New York. It was Hitchcock who commissioned his work for *Hitchy-Koo* and who would introduce him to the formidable Max Dreyfus.<sup>89</sup>

Following *Hitchy-Koo*, he wrote for the *Greenwich Follies* (1924), but would not see his first success on Broadway until 1928, with the show *Paris*. *Paris* contained some of the witty and scandalous lyrics for which Porter would become famous, with songs such as "Let's Do It," which had to be subtitled " (Let's Fall in Love)" in order to clean it up, despite its list of suggestive innuendos cataloguing the animal kingdom.<sup>90</sup> The next year he debuted *Fifty Million Frenchmen* in New York, which so captured the attention of Irving Berlin that he took out an ad in the paper to report that the show had, "one of the best collection of song numbers I have ever listened to. It's worth the price of

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86. Charles Schwartz, *Cole Porter: A Biography* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), 57.

87. Root and Bordman.

88. Ibid; Jasen, 313.

89. Furia, 158.

90. Ibid., 162.

admission to hear Cole Porter's lyrics."<sup>91</sup> His show *Wake Up and Dream* also opened in New York and London in 1929.

In the 1930s a string of shows with varying success opened, but all of them contained memorable songs. "Love for Sale" debuted in *The New Yorkers* of 1930 and *Gay Divorce* (1932) had "Night and Day." The year 1933 brought about *Nymph Errant* with "After You, Who?" and in 1934 Porter had a resounding success with *Anything Goes*. The incomparable Ethel Merman sang both the title song and "Blow Gabriel Blow." Also in 1934 he published one of his songs that he used as party entertainment, "Miss Otis Regrets." In 1935 *Jubilee* made a splash with "Just One of Those Things" and "Begin the Beguine." "It's De-Lovely" came on the scene in 1936 with *Red, Hot and Blue!*<sup>92</sup>

Like other popular song composers in the 1930s, Porter tried his hand in Hollywood. His first score was for *Born to Dance* ("I've Got You Under My Skin") in 1936, followed by *Rosalie* in 1937. That same year he would lose the use of his legs in a horse riding accident, painfully undergoing two dozen different surgeries as a result, with one leg eventually having to be amputated in 1958.<sup>93</sup> Despite this personal tragedy he continued to produce songs for Broadway and Hollywood, such as "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" (*Leave It to Me!*, 1938) and "Don't Fence Me In" (*Hollywood Canteen*, 1944). Porter's songs would be featured in a "semi-fictitious" biopic, *Night and Day*, produced in 1946. 1948 would bring about Cole's largest success, *Kiss Me Kate*, based on Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, which included such showstoppers as "Too

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91. Jasen, 314.

92. Jasen 314-315.

93. "Porter, Cole."

Darn Hot,” “Brush Up Your Shakespeare,” “Were Thine That Special Face,” and “So in Love.” It would go on to a film version in 1953. *Can-Can* (1953) and *Silk Stockings* (1955) would be Porter’s last two works for the stage, but he continued to contribute to film and television with *High Society* (1956) and *Aladdin* (1958).<sup>94</sup>

Despite Cole Porter not fitting the same profile as his contemporaries, he managed to establish his prominence in the songwriting industry with his enduring tunes and lyrics. A Cole Porter song is unmistakable. His songs are identified by their melodic chromaticism and harmonic ease, freely switching in and out of modes. He gave his listeners distinctive lyrics that are delightfully witty; they could be naughty and sophisticated, or sentimental and self-controlled all at the same time. Most notably, he was one of the few popular composers of the day beside Irving Berlin or George M. Cohan who produced both exemplary lyrics and tunes, thus creating a totally integrated work of art.

### **Songs for the Studio: Cole Porter**

#### **“Night and Day”**

*Gay Divorce*, 1932

Lyrics by Cole Porter

“Night and Day” is one of Porter’s most popular songs and deservedly so, according to Alec Wilder. In his estimation, the melody itself has such “character and strength” that it stands on its own. Irving Berlin was an admirer of the tune as well, leaving Max Dreyfus of T.B. Harms the only dissident voice, claiming that the opening

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94. Root and Bordman.

bass line was too chromatic against the melody, and that the general public would not like it.<sup>95</sup> This is one occasion where the otherwise visionary Max Dreyfus was wrong.

Porter claimed that the idea for his lyric came from a chant that he heard in a mosque in Morocco. (He was fond of telling tall-tales about the origins of his songs.) In actuality, he was staying with the Astors while working on the music for *Gay Divorce* and Mrs. Astor was complaining about the “drip, drip, drip” of a broken pipe. This gave him the idea for his lyrics “tick, tick, tock,” and “beat, beat, beat,”<sup>96</sup> thus creating one of his most iconic songs. This unique tune seems to forecast Porter’s later hit, **“I’ve Got You Under My Skin.”**

#### Recommended Recordings

Cole Porter, “Night and Day,” *Kiri Sings Porter*, Kiri Te Kanawa, soprano; Peter Matz, arranger and conductor; The New World Philharmonic, EMI Classics 55050, 1994, compact disc.

Cole Porter, “Night and Day,” *Night and Day: The Cole Porter Album*, Joan Morris mezzo-soprano; William Bolcom, piano, Omega Record Classics OCD 3002, 1988, compact disc.

Kiri Te Kanawa’s rendition of this song is lovely. She doesn’t over-round the vowels in the lines that allow a moment of fuller-voiced singing. Joan Morris also has a rendition with her husband who provides a supremely charming accompaniment at the piano.

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95. Wilder, 230.

96. Furia and Lasser, 103.

## **“Begin the Beguine”**

*Jubilee*, 1935

Lyrics by Cole Porter

This stands out as Porter’s longest popular song ever, at one hundred and eight measures. Wilder’s caveat with this tune is that he cannot sing the song beginning to end without the printed music in front of him.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, this piece takes many musical twists and turns, but it does have the power to transport the listener to a warmer, balmier and more exotic destination.

Again, Porter’s penchant for tall tales has rooted itself into this song’s history. He cites two different stories of origin: in the first one he claims that he was inspired by a native dance in the East Indies, and for the second he states that he was influenced by a dance hall in Paris where the blacks from Martinique would gather.<sup>98</sup> Whatever the story’s genesis, Porter left us with a memorable tune from an exotic land.

### Recommended Recording:

Cole Porter, “Begin the Beguine,” *Thomas Hampson Sings Cole Porter*, Thomas Hampson, baritone; John McGlinn, conductor; The London Symphony Orchestra, EMI 54203, 1991, compact disc.

I included Thomas Hampson’s recording as an example of the danger of erring on the side of “too classical.” This is a piece that needs a few diphthongs and speech-like vowels, so that “palms” doesn’t sound like “poems.”

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97. Wilder, 240.

98. Furia and Lasser, 124.

**“So In Love,” “Were Thine That Special Face,” “Wunderbar”**

*Kiss Me Kate*, 1948

Lyrics by Cole Porter

Cole Porter’s best-known musical, *Kiss Me Kate*, is full of singable gems. “So In Love” is the most memorable ballad from the show. It is aptly suited to a mezzo-soprano voice that can employ evenness of tone from the first, low-sitting phrase, to the more lush climaxes of the piece at E 5 and F sharp 5. The song could also be sung by a soprano with a confident lower middle register. The build to the climax of the tune is marked by long sustained tones on words like “love,” “night,” and “joy.” These round, open vowels make the piece a delight to sing.

“Were Thine That Special Face” may not be as memorable a tune as “So In Love,” but it provides long, legato lines that are carried along by a roiling accompaniment. Porter has considered the singer by giving round and open vowels to the melodic climaxes. There are also opportunities to float the softer sentiments, such as the line “were thine the arms so *warm* and tender,” with “warm” being set off a fourth higher than the rest of the phrase.

A fun duet that could easily be turned into a solo is “Wunderbar.” It’s a typical Viennese-style, operetta waltz and is a cute wink to the genre.

Recommended Recording:

*Kiss Me Kate: All Star Cast*, Thomas Allen, baritone; Diana Montague, mezzo-soprano; John Owen Edwards, conductor; The National Symphony Orchestra, Jay Records 1296, 2001, compact disc.

Leave it to the British to perfect American musical theater. Thomas Allen is not only a fine actor, but also a faultless singer. Diana Montague's mezzo is simultaneously bright and lush, and not a word is missed from her performance. What a great example these two are for classical singers performing this repertoire. Wunderbar!

**Harold Arlen** (b. February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1905; d. April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1986)

Born in Buffalo, New York, Hymen Arluck was the son of a cantor. He grew up singing in his father's choir in the synagogue, but was very shy about performing in public. He began studying piano at age nine, but didn't care to practice his assignments. Instead he preferred to play popular music of jazz and ragtime that was sweeping the nation. Arlen was also an avid record collector, and would attend popular music concerts whenever they came to Buffalo. At the age of fifteen he would form his own professional band, known as *The Snappy Trio*. This group expanded into *The Southbound Shufflers* and would play for local dance halls and excursion boats on Lake Erie. Due to his band's success, Harold was invited to join *The Buffalodians*. The group went on tour to New York City in 1925, playing at the Palace Theater. It was there that the bandleader Arnold Johnson hired Arlen as a singer, arranger and pianist. From these roots, Harold would blossom into one of America's most beloved songwriters.<sup>99</sup>

Harold had ambitions of performing as a singer and actor on stage. In 1929 he was hired by Vincent Youmans to sing the role of Cokey Joe in his Broadway musical, *The Great Day*. The part was cut, but Arlen stayed on the set as a rehearsal pianist after the original pianist took ill. He was fond of re-composing the vamps with his improvisation skills. One day the chorus master observed his mini-composition and suggested that he should write down the tune before someone else stole it.<sup>100</sup> With this advice, Arlen took his song to a friend working for Remick and Company who

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99. Jasen, 12; The Official Harold Arlen Website, "Harold Arlen," <http://www.haroldarlen.com/bio.html> (accessed January 28, 2014).

100. Jasen, 12.



introduced him to the lyricist Ted Koehler. Together Ted and Harold turned the tune into their hit song “Get Happy.” It would go on to appear in a Broadway revue and get published. In 1929 the duo would sign a yearlong contract with the George and Arthur Piantadosi Firm,<sup>101</sup> also establishing themselves as major players in the songwriting business with their creations for The Cotton Club in Harlem. From 1930 to 1934 the team pumped out such hits as, “Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea,” “I’ve Got the World on a String,” and “Stormy Weather.” The club consisted of primarily black performers, inspiring Arlen and Koehler to fuse elements of blues and jazz into their Tin Pan Alley style.<sup>102</sup> In addition to the Cotton Club, Arlen also wrote for the Broadway stage. In 1934 he collaborated with Ira Gershwin and Yip Harburg on the revue *Life Begins at 8:40*. He would meet his future wife on the set of the show, model and actress Anya Taranda.

In 1933 Arlen was lured to Hollywood to work on Samuel Goldwyn’s *Let’s Fall in Love*. This was just the beginning of a prolific career in film, considering he would write tunes for nearly twenty-five films by 1963.<sup>103</sup> 1938 brought about his best-known work, *The Wizard of Oz*, with “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” winning the Academy Award for best song. In 1941 he found a new collaborator in Johnny Mercer when they were both assigned to the movie, *Hot Nocturne*. This was the vehicle for one of their finest songs, “Blues in the Night,” which would become the film’s title. Jerome Kern said this song should have won the Academy Award instead of his song, “The Last Time

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101. The Official Harold Arlen Website.

102. Larry Stempel, “Arlen, Harold,” *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01256> (accessed January 28, 2014).

103. Stempel, Larry.

I Saw Paris.”<sup>104</sup> With the advent of World War II, the pair would work on a series of service films, such as *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942), featuring “That Old Black Magic,” and *Here Comes the Waves* (1944) with the song “Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive.”

Arlen would also continue his Broadway career, writing one of his most successful scores for *St. Louis Woman* (1946). The musical featured songs such as “Any Place I Hang My Hat Is Home,” “I Had Myself a True Love,” and “Come Rain or Come Shine.”<sup>105</sup> In 1954 Truman Capote would famously collaborate with Arlen on “House of Flowers,” with Arlen co-writing the lyrics. Another success of the same year was the film *A Star is Born*, with lyricist Ira Gershwin. The two focused on writing another hit for Judy Garland, one that would fully capture her acting and singing abilities. The result was “The Man That Got Away,” creating another personal anthem for the actress. The following years Arlen would continue to contribute songs to film and stage, even writing for a 1962 cartoon, *Gay Purr-ee*. His final song would be written in 1965, “That’s a Fine Kind o’ Freedom,” with lyricist Martin Charnin.<sup>106</sup>

Arlen became reclusive after his wife Anya’s death in 1970. He would eventually lose his battle with cancer in 1986. He is commemorated on a U.S. Postage stamp from 1996, and in 2000 “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” was named the number one song of the century by the National Endowment for the Arts.<sup>107</sup>

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104. Jasen, 239.

105. Jasen, 14.

106. Jasen, 15.

107. The Official Harold Arlen Website.

## **Songs for the Studio: Harold Arlen**

### **“I’ve Got the World on a String”**

*Cotton Club Parade of 1932*

Lyrics by Ted Koehler

“I’ve Got the World on a String” spans a whole twelfth in just the first two measures of the chorus. Despite this challenge, the piece remains singable and would make an excellent exercise in smoothing out vocal registration. The lyrics and tune are wonderfully sunny and could charm any skeptic.

#### Recommended Recording:

Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler, “I’ve Got the World on a String,” *Come Rain or Come Shine: The Harold Arlen Songbook*, Sylvia McNair, soprano; André Previn, piano; David Finck, double-bass, Phillips 878191, 1996, compact disc.

Years before I met soprano Sylvia McNair, her recordings introduced me to Harold Arlen. As a young soprano with a light voice, I was (and still am) obsessed with the silvery-toned diva. I was in the habit of purchasing whatever new album she put out, and *Come Rain or Come Shine* was a revelation. Each track was better than the next. I had heard many of the tunes on the CD before, but I couldn’t have told you who wrote them. Dr. Steven Zegree is fond of saying “Harold Arlen is the best known composer you’ve never heard of.” McNair’s voice is perfect in this repertoire, and Previn himself worked side by side with Arlen, writing film scores when he was a young man first starting out in the industry.<sup>108</sup> His take on Arlen’s tunes are surely informed by his time

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108. Sylvia McNair, phone interview by author, January 25, 2014.

with the composer. Needless to say, I recommend every song on *Come Rain or Come Shine*.

**“Stormy Weather”**

*The Cotton Club Parade*, 1933

Ted Koehler

This song was Arlen’s original “tapeworm,”<sup>109</sup> a song that broke the thirty-two bar mold with two ten bar sections.<sup>110</sup> This is a bluesy study in octave leaps, which Arlen seems to be fond of (i.e. “Somewhere Over The Rainbow”). Koehler’s lyrics are tender, but keep from becoming overly sentimental with little lifts of comedy, such as “...old rocking chair will get me.” I recommend Sylvia McNair’s above-mentioned recording, *Come Rain or Come Shine*.

**“Somewhere Over the Rainbow**

*The Wizard of Oz*, 1939

Lyrics by Yip Harburg

Sylvia McNair shared a powerful story with me about this song, and the world-wide reach of Arlen’s music. “When I was in Buenos Aires, I was in a dress shop and the lady there found out I was a singer. I sang “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” and she sang along, every note and every word. What was incredible was when I tried this in Kenya with the same result!”<sup>111</sup>

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109. “Tapeworm” is Arlen’s self-imposed term for his songs that are longer than thirty-two measures.

110. Wilder, 261.

111. McNair, interview.

### Recommended Recording

Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg, “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” *ReJoyce*, Joyce DiDonato, mezzo-soprano, Erato Records 9341212, 2013, compact disc.

Many divas give sensitive and beautiful performances of this timeless song. In this newer recording, I am particularly struck by the heartfelt sentiment and tenderness that Di Donato puts into her live performance of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.”

### **“Come Rain or Come Shine,” “Anyplace I Hang My Hat Is Home”**

*St. Louis Woman*, 1946

Lyrics by Johnny Mercer

*St. Louis Woman* was an unsuccessful show for Broadway by Arlen and Mercer. It’s cited as having a weak book, as well as having had troubles with the NAACP, causing actress Lena Horne to bow out of the show. Luckily, many of the songs from this wonderful score survive, including numbers such as **“Legalize My Name”** and **“I Had Myself a True Love.”** Of the former song, Wilder notes that it is “nearly an aria” at sixty-four measures long.<sup>112</sup>

“Come Rain or Come Shine” has a charming story about how it got its title. Mercer was stuck when writing lyrics to Arlen’s tune, not knowing what to write after

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112. Wilder, 282.

“I’m gonna love you...” Harold Arlen jokingly said, “come hell or high water,” but that was just the inspiration that Mercer needed to come up with the title phrase.<sup>113</sup>

With its abundance of repeated notes, this song provides an excellent drill in matching the quality of the tone on different vowels. This song, like many of Arlen’s, is great for a young soprano. The tessitura he employed for his stage works rarely dips into the soprano’s lower passaggio, allowing her to sing in a confident middle voice without worrying about matching her chest register to the rest of the sound. His climaxes and endings also feature high notes at the top of, or just off of, the staff. **“Anyplace I Hang My Hat Is Home,”** has similar virtues, with a “free and easy” swing. This would be a great song to loosen up a metrically rigid student.

Recommended Recording:

*How Glory Goes*, Audra McDonald, Nonesuch 79580, 2000, compact disc.

Audra McDonald is an excellent example of a well-trained voice successfully navigating the Great American Songbook repertoire. She has made her career in the theater, employing a solid vocal technique that has made her a standout in her field. Her diction is clear and the words completely understandable without sounding unnatural. She uses a forward-placed sound that is beautifully mixed with wide-open resonators. Her recording of “Anyplace I Hang My Hat Is Home” and “I Had Myself a True Love” should serve as an excellent model.

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113. Furia and Lasser, 208.

## CHAPTER 4: Conclusion

The Great American Songbook offers a wealth of beautifully-crafted songs for the classical voice studio. The melodies are exceptionally memorable, and the lyrics exhibit wit and sentiment simultaneously. The songs reviewed in this document only scratch at the surface of the works available to the solo singer. Here are some numbers in order to put these composers' vast outputs into perspective. I have commented on just under forty-five songs in this document; Jerome Kern wrote over seven hundred songs, Irving Berlin wrote nearly one thousand, George Gershwin just under nine hundred, Richard Rodgers wrote over fifteen hundred songs, Cole Porter wrote nearly one thousand and Harold Arlen, the least prolific of the group, still composed almost four hundred tunes. That is a huge variety of great songs, with many of them offering the opportunity to improve upon vocal or dramatic skills being taught in the voice studio. Hopefully the recordings presented in this document have not only provided valuable models, but also convinced the reader that this repertoire is very appropriate for classical singers. The Great American Songbook presents a wonderful opportunity to express ourselves not only as singers and artists, but also in our vernacular. By studying and performing these songs we act as musical archivists, preserving these gems for future generations.

## APPENDIX A: Interviews with Sylvia McNair and Timothy Noble

I had the good fortune to speak with Sylvia McNair and Timothy Noble about their successful performing careers in both classical and popular music. Sylvia McNair came into the Great American Songbook repertoire after an impressive worldwide career singing opera and oratorio. Timothy Noble interestingly began his operatic and classical career after a notable career singing music of the Great American Songbook in concert and in musicals. Both of them are inspired teachers, and were able to offer insight into teaching and performing this repertoire.

Their individual interviews were so interesting that I decided to include the transcriptions in their entirety.

**KP:** Please describe when and how you became acquainted with the music of “The Great American Songbook.” Was this repertoire you sang before identifying yourself as a “Classical Singer?”

**SM:** In junior high and high school, music theater was the stuff I loved to sing. This music was in the air where I grew up and around my extended family—it was part of America’s popular “artistic” music at the time.

**TN:** I became acquainted with these songs at the age of three and four. My mom and dad had a dance band and mom played the piano. I used to sit on her suitcase of music—



I still have it. The first song I knew wasn't "Jingle Bells," but "How High the Moon," which was the band's theme song. Wherever the band went, I went too.

**KP:** Please share some of your favorite Great American Songbook composers and compositions.

**SM:** Leonard Bernstein with Betty Comden and Adolf Green. Some people aren't comfortable including Bernstein in this group, but he was writing popular show music in the forties.

I was invited to collaborate with Andre Previn, and the record company dictated that we would record Jerome Kern songs. After a summer of researching, investigating and rehearsing, Jerome Kern was my favorite at the time. His music has that Viennese Operetta feel to it. You're sure glad you have a trained voice when you have to negotiate those long lines and winding melody in "All the Things You Are."

Two years later for the Harold Arlen Album I dove in with all six feet, exploring, investigating and recording, and those songs became my favorite. In 1996 and 1998 it was the Gershwin's (for their respective centenaries). I guess you could say I'm fickle.

**TN:** Cole Porter! Well, I love Richard Rodgers, Harold Arlen and Irving Berlin too. You know, I met Irving Berlin. I toured with Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians. I was the rehearsal director and did arrangements for the group. Irving Berlin loved Fred's group. In 1968 we were invited to appear on the Ed Sullivan Show, which was honoring the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Irving Berlin. Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Diana Ross and the Supremes

were all there. I brought a sandwich for lunch, and Mr. Berlin came and sat down next to me while I was eating and asked me where I was from. I told him Peru, Indiana, and he asked me, “do you know Cole Porter?” (I knew a lot of his relatives, but not him.) From the horse’s mouth, Berlin said, “You know, he was the best of all of us.”

**KP: Please share some of your favorite Great American Songbook lyricists and lyrics and why they are among your favorites.**

**SM:** 1. Betty Comden and Adolf Green, 2. Mercer, 3. Yip Harburg, 4. I feel obligated to say Ira Gershwin because I sing so much of his stuff, 5. Oh, and how could I forget Cole Porter! He was a titan, writing his music and lyrics.

**TN:** Porter, Hammerstein, Carmichael, Gershwin. What’s great is that their songs are still relevant today, even though they were written almost one hundred years ago. I guess I have a soft spot for Porter because he’s from my hometown (Peru, Indiana), but “Every Time We Say Goodbye,” “Night and Day,” and “Begin the Beguine” are all excellent.

**KP: As a professional singer, discuss “crossing-over” and what aspects of singing this repertoire came naturally to you, and which aspects (if any) required more effort or a different approach from what you know as a classical singer.**

**SM:** Well, there were plenty of singers who did both. I studied American Popular Song with Eileen Farrell. She was the kind of singer who would do a show at the Met on

Thursday and Jazz Concert on Saturday. The “Great Wall of China” didn’t used to exist between genres of music. Ezio Pinza was the original Emil de Becque in *South Pacific*. There is an arrangement of Gershwin’s “The Man I Love” I do by Carmen Dragon, it was written for a famous opera singer in the 40s to show off her vocal abilities.

I perform this music both acoustically and with a microphone and I’m comfortable either way. The biggest mistakes opera singers make on a microphone is over-enunciating and over-singing. You have to learn how to put on the soft pedal and give a more intimate “for your ears only” approach to the text and tone production. Learning to sing with a mic and knowing how to use a mic well has helped me in any style of singing. It will pick up if you have tension in your mouth. It acts as a microscope for your jaw, tongue and lips, you have to learn to really open up and relax. Tensions we are not even aware of sound like earthquakes over a mic. It amplifies the good and the bad, and you have to find a way to eliminate over-production.

I don’t have a big voice. I always tried to over-compensate, especially in opera, especially in the U.S. where everyone likes it loud, louder and loudest. I was always pushing instead of letting. I learned how to open up and allow, to let my voice [sing]. That’s my truth. Learning how to use a mic well extended my vocal longevity and credibility.

For acoustic, more of the classical stuff [is necessary]. Enunciate: I really focus on lyrics and words. I use more weight and color. You can’t croon like you do on a mic and be heard at the back of the room.

**TN:** Well, I crossed over into opera! I was singing this stuff in the Poconos, Vegas, Jersey Shore and Miami first. Coming from the Great American Songbook rep, words and diction came first. I always made sure that came across when I sang opera. I don't want to go to the theater and read supertitles.

**KP:** What aspects of performance or stylistic considerations do you find most important in Great American Songbook repertoire?

**SM:** Connection with listeners—use the text to make a connection with people. Audiences love to feel like they matter to you. It's what so many classical musicians have lost.

**TN:** Sing the text. The notes on the page are a roadmap, not a detailed instruction list. You have to make the song fit you. Don't sing right on the beat, lay off the voice a bit.

**KP:** Tell me about some of your unique experiences teaching the Great American Songbook.

**SM:** I've been singing for 32 years now, and the great thing about teaching is that you get to give it away. I like to teach this repertoire because I love it and I'm good at it. It's important for other people to appreciate it.

[A foreign student of mine] was expected to have a musical theater piece in her audition package. I suggested Weill, since he started his career in Europe and wrote in three languages. This is how I guided a non-American student.

**KP: What aspects of singing and performing this repertoire are the easiest or hardest for students to embrace?**

**TN:** Learning how to sing in English, not European vowels, and not to sing note for note. Sing the beauty of all the sounds of all the words. Sing the language the way it's spoken and you'll be understood (you just need to be a little more proactive with the consonants at the end of words.) Sing AMERICAN vowels, sing diphthongs. [Here he gave an example where he sang the word "home." He made sure that I was aware of the diphthong at the end of the "o" vowel and the voiced "m."]

I let my students pick their own repertoire as long as it's not out of their range. I steer them towards "classical" Broadway—it's mostly singable.

**KP: What have you learned about being a musician and a performer from teaching and performing this repertoire?**

**SM:** The biggest payback is being able to sing the language of the audience and have eye-to-eye contact. Being able to watch them respond to the music. You might see someone take another person's hand or the occasional tear. I like to sing "One Hundred

Easy Ways” from *Wonderful Town*. I like to sing to the whites of their eyes as a storyteller and watch them respond. At the Met the orchestra pit is thirty meters wide. You can’t even come close to establishing that kind of contact.

**TN:** Forget everything you ever learned, lighten it up a bit, but sing the same in everything. Use your technique; employ something that works in all genres. It’s the same breathing mechanism, just with a change in breath pressure.

I’ve also learned how much kids don’t know. Most haven’t heard “Night and Day,” or don’t know Cy Coleman or Harold Arlen. They know who George Gershwin is, but most don’t know Ira.<sup>114</sup>

**Some additional comments from Sylvia McNair:**

As I’ve gotten older, my need to touch people’s hearts has increased. So much of classical music has become a brain activity. My brain is stunned by the skill and genius [of classical music] but it is a brain experience, it is primarily my intellect is being stimulated. With popular song it is the flipside. It is my heart that feels stimulated. I’m not saying that classical music is bereft of heart or that popular music is bereft of intellect, but my own desires have changed and I need to be doing something that I have more passion for.

Yes, Katie, what you said earlier, we ought to be recitaling this music as much as we recital Schubert or Brahms. I cheer this!<sup>115</sup>

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114. Timothy Noble, phone interview by author, January 30, 2014.

115. McNair, interview.

## APPENDIX B: Additional Composers and Lyricists of the Great American Songbook

### Composers:

Milton Ager (1893–1979)  
Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)  
Nacio Herb Brown (1896–1964)  
Hoagy Carmichael (1899–1981)  
George M. Cohan (1878–1942)  
John Frederick Coots (1897–1985)  
Walter Donaldson (1893–1947)  
Vernon Duke (1903–1969)  
Duke Ellington (1899–1974)  
Sammy Fain (1902–1989)  
Mack Gordon (1904–1959)  
W.C. Handy (1873–1958)  
Ray Henderson (1896–1970)  
Herman Hupfeld (1894–1951)  
Bart Howard (1915–2004)  
Isham Jones (1894–1956)  
Burton Lane (1912–1997)  
Frank Loesser (1910–1969)  
Jimmy McHugh (1894–1969)  
Henry Mancini (1924–1994)  
Hugh Martin (1914–2011)  
Ralph Rainger (1901–1942)  
Leo Robin (1900–1984)  
Harry Ruby (1895–1974)  
Arthur Schwartz (1900–1984)  
Jule Styne (1905–1994)  
Jimmy Van Heusen (1913–1990)  
Fats Waller (1904–1943)  
Harry Warren (1893–1981)  
Richard A. Whiting (1891–1938)  
Meredith Willson (1902–1984)  
Harry Woods (1896–1970)  
Vincent Youmans (1891–1946)  
Victor Young (1900–1956)

### Lyricists:

Sammy Cahn (1913–1993)  
Betty Comden (1917–2006)  
Howard Dietz (1896–1983)  
Arthur Freed (1894–1973)  
Ted Fetter (1907–1996)  
Dorothy Fields (1905–1974)  
Adolph Green (1914–2002)  
Ira Gershwin (1896–1983)  
Otto Harbach (1873–1973)  
Lorenz Hart (1895–1943)  
Oscar Hammerstien II (1895–1960)  
Gus Kahn (1886–1941)  
Bert Kalmar (1884–1947)  
Jay Lerner (1918–1986)  
Johnny Mercer (1909–1976)  
Andy Razaf (1895–1973)  
Paul F. Webster (1907–1984)  
Jack Yellen (1892–1991)

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